

To Be a Friend

Story: To Be a Friend

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Summary: For Baghi to receive the flute from Amity, how close were they? A series of oneshots on the friendship shared between Ayuthay and Passaj

***Chapter 1*: To Be a Friend**

They were five years old when they first met. One, a dirty, dusty child clad in fur and feathers, the other a clean, cool child clad in gold. Neither of the two could be any different, and it showed in how when the two were introduced. The fur clad child stared at him in curiosity, before turning back to his parents; and the gold clad child simply ignored the other.

The two adults smiled wryly as they looked at the king of Ayuthay, their own clothing carefully cleaned, although both had some small streaks of dirt ingrained upon the cloth. "I'm sorry King Paithos, but Baghi is the only child in Passaj right now- he's unused to playing with others his age."

"I apologize as well, Amiti has been held in awe by the other children and is unused to other children as well. But I believe you came here for trading?"

"Yes, we were hoping that we can actually create an alliance. The empire of Kaocho had been aggressively expanding lately, and Harapa is well... less then worried. They've been edging it on by selling weapons, and promoting Kaocho to passing warriors."

Paithos frown grew at that as he nodded, beckoning the two adults into the palace. "We should talk about this further in. Come."

The two adults nodded, followed him in. The two children, forgotten, found themselves bereft of all adult presence, turned eyes to each other.

In true little children fashion, the first thing out of their mouths were insults. "You look stupid." The two identical

tones filled the air.

It was two sets of highly embarrassed guardians, and one group of panicking, hyperventilating guards that eventually pulled the two children apart.

Baghi glowered at Amiti, clutching his feathered hat close to his chest. Amiti looked down his nose at Bahi, before walking away. Paithos shook his head slightly sadly, saying softly, "I apologize, He starves for attention sometimes."

"Having no parents must be hard." Baghi's parents acknowledged, firmly taking their own son by the hand, and squeezing hard to tell him that they were going to have a very long talk after this.

For three years, every few months, the two met, saw each other, and fought for a few minutes before being separated by scolding guardians. Or panicking guardsmen, who would glance around for a few moments trying to make certain no one saw the two scuffling boys.

Either way by the end of the day, parents and uncle would be regaled with the latest tale of the fight, each side proud of what they had done- with guardians very, very glad that it wasn't up to these two children that the trade relations would rest upon any time soon.

It changed however, when they turned eight years old.

Baghi staggered into Ayuthay, disheveled and biting back tears as he scrubbed at his eyes. A long, shallow gash ran up his arm, bleeding sluggishly. Adults swirled by him, not noticing the child as he slowly made his way to the palace. Unbeknownst to him, however, someone was watching.

Amiti had been very, very bored of late. 'Baghi' or whatever his name was, was supposed to come visiting soon, which meant that he was supposed to be on his best behavior.

Yeah. Riiiigggghhhhtttt-

Like he'd do that for a commoner's child. No matter what Uncle said, it just didn't seem right. The other was always dirty and dusty, clad in strange clothing. Who could properly call themselves royalty if they did such a thing? *No doubt they sleep on the ground. Something that I will never do... Baghi?*

Amiti blinked in surprise as he spotted the other walking slowly through the streets, stumbling every now and then if hurt. The blue-haired prince rose to his feet, body tensing as Baghi stumbled and fell hard. He almost took a step forward as he watched the dirty, dusty child pull himself out of the dirt, and continue on to the palace.

But... The palace... Uncle- The gibbering thoughts unexpectedly fled as someone nudged into him, and Baghi disappeared into the whirl of people. He took a step forward, and the people parted in time to give him a clear glimpse of the other child, and he *ran*.

Too late. The crowd had already swallowed up Baghi, leaving behind the young Amiti to head towards the palace, pushing past people, as he attempted to find the feather that he knew so well.

He didn't notice the small drops of ever darkening liquid that slowly dotted its way up to the palace.

The crowds parted, and he headed up to the palace at a dead run, squeezing his way past the houses that surrounded the palace lake like the expert he was.

He arrived just in time to see Baghi face the flabbergasted guards to say, clearly and concisely, "There are Kaocho soldiers on the road between here and Passaj. Please warn King Paithos," before the eight-year-old fainted dead away.

One guard rushed off to find the King, as the other knelt next to the unconscious child, stripping off the mail gauntlet. A hand pushed its way in front of a small mouth, and the guard breathed a sigh of relief as air gently pushed by. "He's still alive-"

Amiti came up the pathway, kneeling next to Baghi, eyes wandering across the small figure, hands reaching out slowly. His hands automatically reached for the tiny fist that clutched over one arm, slowly prying it away.

Red flowed out in a steady trickle, filling his eyesight, and he flinched, mind screaming that this was wrong, wrong, wrong, *wrong*- A bright light burst from his hands, shooting straight into the arm. The cut healed up instantly, flesh closing up into smooth, unmarred skin.

The crown prince could only sit there stupidly as Uncle Paithos came (quite regally despite the slight panic) to crouch next to the child. "He looks unharmed, but transport him to a healer now. Also, get the soldiers prepared, and head out onto the road to search for Baghi's parents- they might still be fighting. Be warned, we're going against Kaocho-"

Amiti allowed the words to pour in one ear and out the other, as he silently reached out to the other child. The one and only child that hadn't held him in supreme awe since he was born, a child that insulted him, that made him furious, that fought him equally. *My friend.*

He surprised everyone, including his uncle, when he refused to let go of a hand he wasn't even holding. The healer smiled tenderly, as she swept both boys onto the stretcher, and carried them in.

Baghi awoke to darkness, warmth, and a throbbing numbness from his right hand. With a stifled groan he slowly sat up, and the dark memories swirled up into remembrance.

The road was clear, and people laughed and joked with each other as they walked along the road. Behind them rumbled carts filled to the brim with refined zol, ready to head into the furnace to be shaped.

Baghi cheerfully ran ahead of the caravan, ignoring his parents calls to come back, to stay with them-

A dark shadow caught his eye and he turned towards it, a slightly surprised look forming on his face, before his fathers body blocked he view, arms lifting him into the air, a warm voice scolding-

Red splattered, screams began to fill the air, and there was the sound of bodies hitting the dusty ground. His mothers face swam into view as she grabbed him by the arm. Red blossomed in her middle. "Baghi! Go to Ayuthay and warn King Paithos that Kaocho soldiers are attacking!"

A snore snapped him out of the memories, and slowly, ever so slowly, his head turned to the blue-haired prince sitting right next to him. His right hand was being tightly clutched at, and some tight knot deep within him loosened just a little.

"So? What happened?"

Baghi's head snapped up as Paithos voice drifted through the doorway. A soldier's voice came back softly, but clearly. "The entire caravan was killed. All of the Zol was stolen, and it's been covered up messily. We're tracking down the bodies right now."

"Send a soldier to Passaj, and warn Bogho, and ask him to come as quickly as possible. Baghi... will need the support when he wakes up...Wait, where's my nephew?"

"Prince Amiti is currently with Baghi... he hasn't left the others side since this afternoon when Baghi collapsed before the palace."

Baghi numbly allowed the rest of the conversation to flow across him, staring blankly out into space. Amiti was beside him. Amiti was holding his hand.

A warm summer breeze, and the sound of crickets caught his attention, and his gaze turned outward.

Through the window he could see palm trees sway, and stars twinkle faintly.

It was nothing like home, where one had a 180 degree view of the land surrounding, where stars burned so brightly that it was almost like daytime, and the still air was broken by nothing.

Homesickness swelled up in his chest, as slowly, ever so slowly it sank in. Home wasn't quite home anymore. Not without mom and dad-

"Baghi?"

The voice, just like the hand, snapped him out of whatever state he was about to fall into, and wide eyes turned to the

prince. "A...miti?"

"Baghi, you're awake! Thank goodness!" A hug caught him off guard, and he was distantly aware that he was dropping dust onto the Prince's bottom half of clothing (he was only wearing half of his clothing like usual). He blinked a few times in confusion, before awkwardly hugging the other boy back, deeply breathing in the smell of water.

"You... smell like water."

"Huh?" Amiti blinked in confusion at the random comment, before his head tilted to one side. "Do you want to go to the baths? We have lots of them, and they're all heated."

"...Yes please." Baths were rare in Passaj- there just wasn't enough water to waste generally.

Amiti smiled, and Baghi was struck by the smile- it was the first time he had ever seen it. It was the first time he and Amiti had done anything other than fight as a matter of fact...

"Then let's avoid all the guards and go! We'll be back before too much longer!"

Baghi allowed himself to be led out of the room.

Bogho sighed sadly as he slowly approached the king. His weary bones ached from the hard climb down Passaj mountain, and he'd already visited the attack site-

He could only imagine the state his grandson would be in currently.

"Paithos." Bogho dispensed with the greetings to nod at the younger king, tiredness etched in every crowline wrinkle on his face. The Paithos nodded back.

"According to the guards neither Baghi or Amiti have woken up yet- I must admit I'm surprised at how much care Amiti is showing Baghi. The boy has not left Baghi's side yet."

Bogho nodded serenely. "I do believe the little scuffles are their own way of saying hello. Otherwise there'd be a lot more crying involved." Bogho paused and cackled to himself almost secretly, "Who knows, they might yet prove to be closer then normal friends."

Then, abruptly, he started walking towards the healers rooms. "I shall fetch Baghi, and take him home. I'll recompense you for the healers fee, but Baghi probably wishes to return home, and there is the funeral..."

Bogho sighed, looking every inch like his age, his face saddened. King Paithos respectively said nothing- Bogho had been running Passaj alone for the longest of times, ever since his friends had abandoned him and made their own way out into the world, leaving behind only a few miners in Passaj. It was a hard task for anyone, let alone Bogho whom had already turned the ruling over once.

"If you wish... Baghi may stay here." Bogho blinked, bushy eyebrows rising. Paithos expounded on his offer, "Amiti has need of a playmate, and you yourself have stated that you're too old to go running after little children nowadays. If you want, Baghi may stay here for a few years-"

"NO!" The scream caught the adults and guardsmen alike off guard. Baghi stood in the doorway, a stunned looking Amiti by his shoulder. He ran up to Bogho, catching the older man

by the hand. "You can't send me away Grandpa! Who else is going to help you run the village?"

Amiti looked slightly surprised as he looked at Baghi's straight back, and the fiery determination in his eyes. Then, he smiled slightly, as he nodded. "I agree Uncle. Baghi does his town credit, and I'm quite certain that they will need all the help they can get in the next few years to come."

And, for the first time in their lives, the boys finally found a friend in each other.

a/n: Whew, that was long. Now then, on to stuff you'll probably never read. This is a series of oneshots. The other chapters may or may not be as long depending on the prompt. Please don't forget to review!